



October 30, 2023

Dear Superintendent Woods,

This letter serves as a follow-up to the 2023 Annual Summative Designations letter that you received last week notifying you that your district has one or more schools identified for school improvement status via the Illinois Accountability System. I write to share information and explain next steps regarding schools that were previously identified as being in Targeted improvement status on Report Card 2018 and due to a Targeted designation for the same subgroup(s) on Report Card 2023, have moved to Comprehensive improvement status. See Appendix A for a list of your district's schools that are in Comprehensive improvement status.

What is school improvement status?

School improvement status begins with an initial annual summative designation of Comprehensive or Targeted and continues for **four years**, regardless of changes in annual summative designations.

ISBE provides tiered professional and financial resources during the four-year period of school improvement status through the Department of School/District Improvement. The goal of school improvement is to build the capacity of school leaders to implement and sustain effective school improvement practices, ultimately assisting schools with exiting improvement status. Federal Title I, Part A, Section 1003 School Improvement funds support school improvement activities and services.

The first year following the designation is reserved for planning and writing the required School Improvement Plan (SIP), including the completion of a required school-level needs assessment completed in conjunction with an ISBE-designated vendor, American Institute for Research (AIR). The subsequent three years are reserved for implementation of the SIP. Comprehensive schools are assigned a School Improvement Coordinator to support them monthly through the school improvement process. See Appendix B for the full list of school improvement supports and requirements.

What is the School Improvement Grant and how long will my district receive funds?

- o The first year following the designation is reserved for planning. Schools designated Comprehensive improvement status receive **\$55,000** in Title I, Part A, Section 1003 School Improvement Grant funds to support the planning year. Schools designated Comprehensive must use **\$38,602** of the Title I, Part A, Section 1003 school improvement funds for AIR to administer the school-level needs assessment.
- o The subsequent three years are reserved for implementation. Schools in Comprehensive improvement status receive a base funding amount of **\$70,000** in implementation year one.

The purpose of the grant is to build the capacity of school leaders to implement and sustain effective school improvement practices. For schools in Comprehensive status, the funds will be utilized to pay for the school-level needs assessment conducted by AIR. Examples of other school improvement practices include compensating staff to work on School Improvement Plans, review data, conduct vertical and horizontal curriculum articulation activities, as well as releasing staff for collaborative planning time. Further information regarding the allowable uses of school improvement funding can be accessed [here](#). See Appendix C for a chart of the funding structure of the Title I, Part A, Section 1003 School Improvement Grant.

When and how can my school exit school improvement status?

In general, schools exit school improvement status after completing the four-year school improvement cycle (i.e., one planning year and three implementation years) and meet the exit criteria. See Appendix D for the path to exit school improvement status for Report Card 2023 schools.

Where can I find more information about school improvement and what are my next steps?

The School/District Improvement Department is ready to provide immediate information and assistance to schools designated in Comprehensive improvement status. Below are resources for all district and school personnel who will take an active role in school improvement efforts.

1. Attend the Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 Newly Designated in Improvement Status Information Webinar for districts and schools. [Register here](#).
 - 2-3 p.m. Nov. 6
 - 10-11 a.m. Nov. 8
2. Attend the FY 2024 School Improvement Planning Grant Application Webinar. [Register here](#).
 - 3-4 p.m. Nov. 28
 - 10-11 a.m. Nov. 29
3. Access the online checklist for Comprehensive designations.
 - [Getting Started with School Improvement as a Comprehensive School](#).
4. Access these two documents to assist you in planning ahead for upcoming school improvement-related activities:
 - Comprehensive: [A Year in the Life of School Improvement Planning](#) & [Monthly Topics and Tasks](#)
5. [Watch On-Demand Learning Series 1](#), Getting Started with School Improvement. This series contains three brief videos on school improvement efforts.
6. Please expect an email from AIR at Illinois Needs Assessments (ILNA@air.org) to initiate the more rigorous needs assessment, including the execution of a written contract for the work. Districts will need to identify the point of contact for the needs assessment planning process.
7. Schools with Comprehensive designations can expect an email from your assigned School/District Improvement Coordinator to schedule an initial introduction meeting.

All schools are invited to attend the upcoming Multilingual Illinois Statewide Conference in Conjunction with ESSA Dec. 5-7 in Oak Brook. The conference will offer multiple school improvement focused sessions and tabletop discussions. This conference is an allowable use for both planning and implementation years within the Title I, Part A, Section 1003 school improvement funds. Registration information can be found [here](#).

The School/District Improvement team looks forward to supporting your work with school improvement. For more information, please visit our [School/District Improvement](#) webpage. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out via the School/District Improvement helpline at schoolimprovement@isbe.net or 217-524-1817.

Sincerely,



Dr. Christine Paxson
Director of School/District Improvement

Cc: Jennifer Saba, Executive Director, Center for Improvement & Innovation
Nikki Combs, School Improvement Coordinator
Kelly Mahoney, Northview Elem School

Appendix A

2023 School Improvement Grant Information

The table illustrates the base funding structure for the Title I, Part A, Section 1003 School Improvement Grant for schools newly designated in improvement status in 2023. Schools in improvement status receive base funding amounts each year of the grant.

School Name	2023 Annual Summative Designation	Cohort Year (School Year 2023-24)	School Improvement Status	Term within School Improvement Status	Assigned School/District Improvement Coordinator	Planning Grant Allocation Amount
Northview Elem School	Comprehensive	RC23	Comprehensive	Planning Year	Nikki Combs	\$55,000.00

Appendix B

Statewide System of Support and ESSA Requirements for Comprehensive Schools

The table below summarizes the supports provided by School/District Improvement Department to assist Local Education Agencies (LEAs) as they help schools designated Comprehensive support exit improvement status. The table also summarizes the program requirements set forth in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

Statewide System of Support for Comprehensive Schools	ESSA Requirements for Comprehensive Schools
<p>The following are services provided to districts with schools in Comprehensive improvement status:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Direct monthly support from a School Improvement Coordinator.• access to evidence-based school improvement resources on the School/District Improvement webpage.• Access to support from a School Improvement Coordinator via the Helpline at schoolimprovement@isbe.net or 217-524-1817.• Title I, Part A, Section 1003 School Improvement Planning Grant funds to support allowable school improvement activities and services.	<p>LEAs must, in partnership with stakeholders --including school leaders, teachers, and parents -- develop and implement an improvement plan that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is based on a school-level needs assessment (completed in conjunction with AIR).• Includes goals to improve student outcomes.• Includes evidence-based practices.• Identifies resource inequities.• Is approved annually by the school, the district, the local board of education, <i>and</i> ISBE.• Is monitored and periodically reviewed by the LEA <i>and</i> by ISBE.

Appendix C

Base Funding Structure for the Title I, Part A, Section 1003 School Improvement Grant

The table below illustrates the base funding structure for the Title I, Part A, Section 1003 School Improvement Grant for schools newly designated in improvement status in 2023. Schools in improvement status receive base funding amounts each year of the grant.

	FY 2024 (2023-24)	FY 2025 (2024-25)	FY 2026 (2025-26)	FY 2027 (2025-26)
REPORT CARD (RC) 2023	Planning	Implementation Year 1	Implementation Year 2	Implementation Year 3
COMPREHENSIVE (Schools that were previously identified as being in Targeted improvement status on report card 2018 and due to a Targeted designation for the same subgroup(s) on report card 2023, have moved to Comprehensive improvement status)	\$55,000	\$70,000	\$25,000	\$20,000

Appendix D

School Improvement Status for Schools

The tables below summarize a path to exit school improvement status for all current cohorts of schools.

RC 2023 Designated Schools in Improvement Status

